

Circular Letter No. 10.

September, 2, 1910.

To Supervising Principals:--

Accompanying this letter you will find a table showing the average number of teachers during the school year 1908-10 for each district, the number of visits made by each Supervising Principal during the year, and the average number of visits made per teacher. Owing to the necessity condensed for in which these data must be presented here, it is impossible to show more than a small part of the interesting facts regarding the distribution and frequency of school visitation. The figures for the average number of visits per teacher show great variation--from 34.1 to 7.1. In but five districts is the average below one visit per month. Judging from the reports, graded and rural schools have been about equally favored with visits, but the night schools have been somewhat neglected. In order to obtain satisfactory results from our night schools, it is essential that the supervising official visit them as frequently as possible to encourage the pupils, most of whom have worked hard during the day, and to assist the teacher who has to confront problems not found in the day schools.

As long as the time and number of visits are left to your discretion and in order that these visits may result in the greatest good to the teachers and the interests

confided to your charge, the following suggestions should be observed:

It is unnecessary and possibly inadvisable to make the round of all the schools in your district monthly one after another throughout the year with mechanical regularity. Every school in your district should be visited during the first school month in order to be sure that the year starts off right. After the first month, the frequency of visits may be in proportion to the need which you notice on the part of the teachers for professional help and advice. A school that is found in a satisfactory condition with a teacher who is doing honest, earnest and efficient work, does not need to be visited as frequently as one with unsatisfactory material conditions and with a teacher whose methods and discipline give proof of the need of inspection and assistance. In other words, you should devote the major portion of your time to those schools and teachers that most require your attention and help, doing all in your power to bring them up to the standard of the best. Generally speaking the strong and efficient teachers should be visited on an average of once a month and the weaker and less efficient teachers more frequently.

There has been some doubt in the past as to how long a supervising official should remain in a school to consider his visit official and so report it. Although it is not

advisable that the Department make an absolute ruling determining this matter, it would seem that the supervising official should remain in a given school long enough to form a clear and correct judgment of the grade of work being done in the class or classes observed. As recitations in the first grade are of fifteen minutes duration, it would be impossible, as a rule, to determine the exact value of a class in language, for example, unless the entire recitation were heard. In the higher grades of the grammar schools a longer time would be necessary to judge of a recitation in a given subject, as the classes are of longer duration. Thus to report a visit as official, you should remain in the school throughout one entire recitation at least and long enough to form a clearly defined and accurate judgment of the work of the teacher and pupils.

On the occasion of each official visit the School Register must be signed. You should leave with the teacher a written report containing criticisms of a constructive rather than of a destructive character. Whenever you criticise a certain method, for example, as unsatisfactory, you should state why it is unsatisfactory and suggest the changes necessary to obtain satisfactory results. You should also find out whether any supplies are needed in the school to make the work thoroughly efficient.

All criticisms should be made in duplicate, one copy to be kept on file in the schools room by the teacher and the other to be filed in the office of the Supervising Principal. The value of a visit is twofold--to the Supervising Principal in learning how he can help the work in that particular school--to the teacher in being able and encouraged to do better work. A visit where these two ends are not gained is worse than time lost. Whenever advisable you should take a part in the class work and give quick oral drills, and, in general, make your visit something to be anticipated with pleasure by the teacher and pupils rather than a dreaded inspection on the part of a superior officer.

Make your monthly report of visits, Form C; in chronological order without attempting to group by class of schools or by municipalities.

After the name of each teacher write an abbreviation to indicate his classification according to contract. In the column "School and Grade" give name of graded school and barrio of rural school, except that in case of a rural school within town limits the word "Town" should be written. In every case the name of the school, barrio, etc. should be followed by a number indicating the grade taught. Under "Exercise observed" mention, besides the classes observed, opening exercises, dismissal, recess,

etc. Such exercises of a general nature involving several schools of a group may be credited to the principal or acting principal, The name of the class observed should be followed by a number to indicate the grade reciting.

Notice that these reports are for recording visits to schools and teachers and are not intended to record other activities of the Supervising Principal.

Respectfully,

Commissioner of Education.

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Enclosure